



International Research Network for Food Quality and Health

Seminar October 20th, from 9-10 am CE(S)T at ZOOM

The role of initiatives in sustainability transitions of food systems

The workshop is free of charge, but you have to sign up at shb@nexs.ku.dk, just write FQH as subject and you will receive a zoom link for the meeting

Program:

9.00-9.05 Welcome by Carola Strassner

9.05 – 9.35 "The role of initiatives in sustainability transitions of food systems" by Ph.D. fellow Friederike Elsner



Friederike is a researcher and PhD fellow at FH Münster University of Applied Sciences and Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany focusing on the role of initiatives in sustainability transitions of food systems, from a transition theory perspective. She is working in two international research projects, SysOrg (Organic agro-food systems as models for sustainable food systems in Europe and Northern Africa) and INSUM (Indicators for assessment of health effects of consumption of sustainable, organic school meals in Ecoregions) and is an active member in the Network of Early Career Researchers in Sustainability Transitions (NEST).

9.35-9.55 Discussions in plenum or break-out rooms dependent on number of attendants

9.55-10.00 Wrap-up, presentation of next workshop and goodbye

Abstract

The role of initiatives in sustainability transitions of food systems

In their present form, agri-food systems contribute to environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, agri-food systems suffer under these worsening developments. A systemic transition towards more sustainable agri-food systems is thus undeniable. More sustainable forms and practices of agriculture or consumption patterns to the dominant ways of doing are being developed and tested by different actors and actor groups from civil society, governments or the private realm. This research investigates these initiatives engaged in agri-food system sustainability transitions and their ways and means to challenge the dominant agri-food regime as well as the barriers and drivers they face. Guided by transition theory, we analysed data from initiatives from five different territorial cases in Europe (Copenhagen, Denmark; Warsaw Poland; Cilento Bio-district, Italy; the Organic Farming Model Region North Hesse, Germany) and Northern Africa (Kenitra Province, Morocco). The initiatives are mainly tackling the dominant agri-food regime within six different domains, namely (a) practices (e.g. agricultural practices and methods), materials, technologies, (b) policies, regulations, institutions, (c) socio-culture (e.g. consumer preferences, social relations, habits), (d) science, knowledge, skills, (e) food supply chain, and (f) nutrition and health. Collaboration and networking between initiatives from different realms as well as local political actors seem to be conducive for initiatives' development whereby a lack of funding or established infrastructures represent inhibiting factors.